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SUBJECT: Santiago Oct. 23 Media Report

Lead Story

[¶1.](#) Public school teachers began an indefinite strike today. In this context, the government instructed schools to remain open and deliver lunches, the Ministry of Education said it would deduct from teacher's paychecks those days they are on strike, and mayors said they would request legal protection so that they can hire replacements (Conservative, independent El Mercurio, 10/23).

U.S.-Related News

[¶2.](#) The negotiations in Congress to confirm Arturo Valenzuela as Assistant Secretary of State for Hemispheric Affairs have been tough. Republican Senator Jim DeMint is blocking Valenzuela's nomination based on the White House's policy in Honduras. Chilean diplomatic sources said that DeMint wants a "graceful" solution for Micheletti as a requirement to confirm Valenzuela and added that Obama's visit to Chile depends on what happens in this case (Conservative, newsweekly Que Pasa, 10/23).

[¶3.](#) "Conservative billionaire Sebastian Pinera seems set to win Chile's presidential election in December, therefore ending two decades of center-left rule" The Washington Post reported yesterday. Both Pinera and Marco Enriquez Ominami call themselves candidates "of change," although their proposals do not differ significantly from those launched by the Bachelet administration, said The Post (Leading popular daily, Las Ultimas Noticias, 10/23).

[¶4.](#) Editorial: "Obama's Most Important Decision."

"In 2006, the situation in Iraq seemed also inextricable, but it changed with military reinforcement and the conversion of former enemies into allies. A similar formula seems possible in Afghanistan" (La Segunda, 10/22).

15. Colombian magazine "Cambio" said the text of the military agreement that Bogota is negotiating with Washington for the use of military bases will give the United States "access and use of three air force and two naval bases, the army's Instruction and Training Center in Tolemaida, and other units that might be necessary for joint operations." The agreement, said the magazine, limits the number of U.S. soldiers that can use the bases to 800, although an increase or decrease in military personnel and advisors will depend on needs. Reportedly, Colombia's Congress could eventually review and postpone the agreement. Foreign Minister Jaime Bermudez said yesterday that U.S. soldiers would have immunity, but not contractors (Government-owned, La Nacion, 10/23).

Local

16. Argentine President Cristina Fernandez will arrive in Santiago on October 30 to sign with President Bachelet an overall integration agreement between the two countries, said Foreign Minister Mariano Fernandez (Conservative, independent La Tercera, 10/23).

"Salitre" Exercise

17. "Having observed the (Salitre) exercise... it is clear that there is not one element in it that should even remotely concern Peru.... But Lima should reflect on the fact that it is excluding itself from an exercise in which the three most important air force institutions in the region are taking part ... as well as many other countries... that sent observers, such as Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Paraguay.... If Peru is concerned with regional integration, mutual trust, and with the noteworthy initiative of lowering military expenses, then it should not be excluding itself from these exercises" (Raul Sohr column, La Nacion, 10/23).
SIMONS